

U.S. Department of Education
2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Sandy Tinsley

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name South Forsyth Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4670 Windermere Parkway

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Cumming State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30041-6059

County Forsyth County State School Code Number* 0598

Telephone 770-888-3170 Fax 770-888-3175

Web site/URL http://www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/sfms E-mail stinsley@forsyth.k12.ga.us

Twitter Handle	Facebook Page	
<u>https://twitter.com/SouthForsyth</u>	<u>https://www.facebook.com/SouthForsyth</u>	
<u>MS</u>	<u>MS</u>	Google+ <u> </u>

YouTube/URL Blog Other Social Media Link

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. L. C. (Buster) Evans E-mail: bevans@forsyth.k12.ga.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Forsyth County Tel. 770-887-2461

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Darla Light
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 20 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 35 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☐ Urban or large central city
 - ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - ☒ Suburban
 - ☐ Small city or town in a rural area
 - ☐ Rural
3. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	187	160	347
7	168	157	325
8	138	144	282
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total Students	493	461	954

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 18 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 72 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 6%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	28
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	27
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	55
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	954
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.058
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
4 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 2
 Specify non-English languages: Korean
Spanish
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %
 Total number students who qualify: 55

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
92 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

16 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	28 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	30 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	15 Speech or Language Impairment
2 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
1 Mental Retardation	2 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0 Multiple Disabilities	0 Developmentally Delayed

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers	33
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	22
Paraprofessionals	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

PART III – SUMMARY

South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) traces its roots to 1981, when it was founded as South Forsyth Junior High School. Located in Forsyth County, 30 miles north of Atlanta, (SFMS) serves students in the southeast portion of the county. Over the years, the school moved from the junior high school concept to a middle school model serving grades six through eight.

The school is located on 27.29 acres and has 59 classrooms serving 1,026 students. The school building has 130,596 square feet including a gymnasium. An athletic field is located on the southern portion of the campus and is equipped with bleachers, coaching tower and electronic scoreboards.

SFMS' mission statement is "Educating, motivating and empowering today's students for tomorrow's opportunities." The school's vision is to provide each student with an engaging educational experience, preparing them for success in high school, college and beyond. As such, there are a variety of classes and extracurricular programs serving the needs and interests of a diverse student body.

SFMS offers a number of high school courses for credit, including Accelerated Coordinate Algebra/Analytical Geometry, Spanish 1, Chorus, Band and Dramatic Arts. Extracurricular academic competition programs include Academic Bowl, Robotics and MathCounts. Competitive athletics are open to seventh and eighth grade students including football, basketball cheerleading, golf and track. Intramural sports are offered to students on all grade levels. A wide variety of extracurricular clubs and organizations are an integral part of the students' education.

SFMS has won numerous awards and recognitions for academic excellence. In 2008, the school received a Bronze Award from the Governor's office of Student Achievement. In the following years SFMS won awards of increasing status including a Silver Award in 2009 and Platinum Awards in 2010 and 2011. SFMS was recognized as a Georgia School of Excellence in 2010. In 2013, the eighth grade students were the top scoring students on the Georgia Middle Grades Writing Assessment. The Robotics Team qualified for world championships for the past five years.

Parent and community involvement is a key component of the school's success. Each year, South Forsyth Middle School hosts several events to involve parents and community members. The Fall Festival is a showcase of student talent where parents, families and community members can gather at school on a fall evening for dinner, while enjoying the arts as students perform in band, chorus and dramatic arts. Student artists' work is also on display for all to enjoy as a part of this annual celebration. Science Night is another annual tradition where faculty members, community members and high school students provide engaging science and technology-based activities for students to experience. Seventh and eighth grade students also participate in a "Day of Service" each year, going on site to serve community organizations that provide food and services to needy citizens. The PTA provides critical support for these events and other school activities.

When the current campus was completed in 1998, southern Forsyth County was predominantly rural in nature, with new subdivisions just beginning development. As the area has transitioned to a vibrant suburban community with rapid population growth, SFMS has become increasingly diverse. Predominately Caucasian a decade ago, Asian students are the fastest growing segment of the student population. Currently, almost 20 percent of the student population is Asian and that percentage is increasing rapidly with each passing year. The staff consistently works to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

With the growth and success of the community, expectations for the school and students continue to rise. Based on the awards, honors and recognition that SFMS has received for student performance and success, South Forsyth Middle School continues to meet the needs of each student with an eye on their future as productive members of the community.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

A.

Georgia's annual assessment, the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) measures a student's understanding and knowledge of the Georgia State curriculum. Results are reported within three categories: Does not Meet (scale score below 800), Meets (scale score 800 to 849), and Exceeds (scale score 850 and higher).

South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) students consistently score in the Meets and Exceeds range in all five content areas. Over 99% of students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades scored in the Meets and Exceeds categories for Reading, Language Arts and Mathematics. This includes our subgroups of Students with Disabilities (SWD), Asian, White and Hispanic. The Annual School Improvement Plan goal is to move more students from the Meets level into the Exceeds level every year.

Eighth grade students take the Georgia Middle Grades Writing Assessment, which is also scored as Does not Meet, Meets and Exceeds. A student must score between 200 and 249 to meet standards and must score above 250 to exceed standards. In 2013, SFMS had the highest scale score for Georgia middle schools on the state writing assessment with 30% in the Exceeds category. In 2014, SFMS scored 33% in the Exceeds category.

B.

In recent years, South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) has consistently been successful in the three core areas of Reading, Language Arts and Mathematics. The scores for all three grade levels, including the subgroups, have ranged between 99 and 100% in the Meets and Exceeds categories each year. Annually, the goal of SFMS is to move more students into the Exceeds category for each subject area. Sixth grade students have moved from 71 to 84% Exceeds over the past five years in Reading and from 60 to 64% in Mathematics. Seventh grade students have moved from 38 to 72% Exceeds in Reading over the past five years and 63 to 80% in Mathematics. Eighth grade students have also shown gains in the area of Reading with 57% Exceeds moving to 77% over the past five years. The only area in which the number of students scoring in the Exceeds category decreased is in eighth grade Mathematics, with the Exceeds category dropping from 70% in 2009 to 67% in 2013, the first year that the new Common Core Standards were introduced on the CRCT. Staff feedback indicates that the accelerated curriculum in Mathematics presented challenges for eighth graders in the first year. However, 100% of eighth grade students scored the Meets or Exceeds range in 2013 for Mathematics, improving from 96% in 2009.

The Students With Disability (SWD) subgroup performed as successfully as their peers on all subjects on the CRCT each year. While SWD students typically performed in the Meets category, the goal for this subgroup of students is to move to the Exceeds category in each academic area. The scores over the past five years for the SWD subgroup demonstrates progress but there is still work to do to move this subgroup into the Exceeds category. This subgroup has moved from a Reading mean scale score of 817 in 2009 to 838 in 2013. In Mathematics, the mean scale score for this subgroup increased from 822 in 2009 to 835 in 2013. This growth demonstrates that interventions and strategies that were implemented are working and that, over time, these scores will move into the Exceeds category.

Instruction for the SWD subgroup is focused on enriching reading fluency and comprehension skills, including inference and higher level thinking skills. In Mathematics, the instruction is focused on computation along with enhancing reading skills to promote success with the higher number of word problems and higher level thinking that is needed for success.

After carefully reviewing trends, students are placed in a variety of classes to encourage success. The three main levels of classes include on-level, advanced/gifted and accelerated. SFMS also offers Resource Literacy and Resource Math for Special Education students as well as Math Literacy and Reading Literacy

for regular education students. Students are placed in these classes based on performance on the CRCT, formative assessment results and teacher observation.

The state of Georgia has moved away from Adequate Yearly Progress monitoring with the implementation of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). According to the Georgia Department of Education, the CCRPI “is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.” Based on this new assessment tool, SFMS received all green (successful) flags on each of the two published reports, indicating that all subgroups are meeting or exceeding their target goals.

2. Using Assessment Results:

While CRCT results are important in demonstrating the success of South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) students, other data, especially formative data, is collected to show student growth and identify areas of needed improvement. Data teams comprised of teachers by grade level and content area identify areas of student achievement as well as areas for improvement. Data teams meet prior to each unit to create a common summative assessment. After this is given as a pre-assessment, the teams meet to compare data and plan research-based instructional strategies to address student needs. Students are placed into four categories: proficient, close-to-proficient, far-to-go and intervention. Students who score proficient on the pre-assessment already have the knowledge that would be taught in the unit and therefore are given higher level thinking instruction and accelerated work to move them past the basic standards. Students in the close-to-proficient and far-to-go categories are taught the standard lessons but specific strategies are put in place to ensure their success.

Students in the intervention category receive more intensive structured help and the tools they need to be successful. Throughout the teaching and learning process, data teams meet to make any mid-course corrections that are needed to gain student success. Students receive ongoing formal and informal feedback regarding their performance in each academic class.

Beyond unit summative assessments, students are administered two county-based interim assessments for Reading and Math. These assessments are given as a pre-assessment in September and again in March, prior to annual standardized testing. These results provide the teachers a method to gauge the standards on which each student needs to focus prior to the end of the school year.

SFMS has strong parent, student and community ties. Multiple opportunities are provided by the school to encourage parents and students, as well as community members, to learn about student achievement. An Open House is held at the beginning of the year to orient students and their parents to the schools and their classes. Sixth graders attend Eagle Camp, which focuses on a successful transition to middle school. Curriculum Night is held during the first few weeks of school to guide parents and students through the grade-level expectations and standards for each subject area. Throughout the school year parents receive student progress reports every 4 1/2 weeks. In addition to these reports, parents and students can access grades and student progress through the Parent Portal interface. Parent conferences are held twice a year on early release days.

For students who are struggling with the standards based instruction, a Response to Intervention (RTI) process moves students from a lower level of monitoring to a Student Support Team (SST), which consists of teachers, parents, counselors and, when necessary, a school psychologist. SST meetings identify student academic needs and the research-based intervention strategies to support struggling students.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) not only has a reputation for high student achievement but also for impacting staff development and student learning at other schools in Forsyth County. Implementation in the data team process and adoption of innovative strategies such as the University of Kansas Strategic Instruction Model® (SIM) set SFMS apart from other schools in the district. Additionally, SFMS hosted

over 100 educators, administrators and district office personnel throughout the region for Forsyth County's BYOT (bring your own technology) tours.

The data team process is a growing initiative in Forsyth County. SFMS teachers are considered experts in this area and are often asked by the district office to lead staff development for other teachers and schools. SFMS' use of the data team process has increased student learning. Common summative assessment data is collected and analyzed and used to drive instructional methods to ensure mastery of standards.

SFMS' high academic performance can also be attributed to implementation of SIM strategies. These research-based strategies were developed at the University of Kansas, and enhance learning across all disciplines. SFMS is honored to have a certified Kansas SIM instructor on staff and she attends conferences across the state, training other educators and administrators in our district. She is also leads professional learning and staff development at the district level as well.

Student use of technology in learning is a key initiative at SFMS. This initiative was recently showcased at one of Forsyth County's technology tours. Approximately 150 educators and other personnel from across the state and country saw the transformational practices that incorporate technology as a means to increase creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking. Lesson plans were shared with educators via Google Docs and Quick Response (QR) codes, enabling visitors to incorporate technology strategies into their own lessons. Visitors were impressed with the high levels of student engagement, collaboration and higher order thinking skills they observed while touring classrooms.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

The goal of education is to produce students who have mastered the state curriculum standards, exhibit strong personal qualities, and are prepared to compete in a global environment. This endeavor cannot be accomplished without the help and support of parents and community.

At South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS), partnerships with parents and local businesses are vital. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) provides the main structure for parent involvement supporting student learning. Two years ago, the PTA committed to a new fundraising strategy entitled "Focus on Learning." Instead of asking students and parents to spend time and effort with multiple fundraising activities, the PTA asked parents to make donations to fund the many PTA-sponsored programs at SFMS. The parents met the challenge and in the first year raised over \$20,000. With continued financial support through donations, the PTA is able to fund the school store, the Read and Quiz program, and a Teacher Grant Program, which enables teachers to submit a grant request for classroom materials, instructional technology programs and supplemental texts. The PTA is also actively involved with many school-wide events such as the fine arts Fallapalooza, SFMS Days of Service, Science Night and Club Night. The PTA also shows their appreciation and support for teachers by providing duty-free luncheons, monthly gifts and classroom supply contributions.

Forsyth County Schools, in association with the Cumming-Forsyth Chamber of Commerce, facilitates the Partners in Education program, a county-wide initiative that connects local businesses with schools. At SFMS, local businesses are encouraged to connect and support the school's many clubs. Students benefit greatly from the partnership with businesses that provide financial support as well as volunteer time to our clubs. The school-business partnership has greatly impacted the robotics teams, which has earned a place at the World Robotics (VEX) Competition in each of the past five years. Other clubs that Partners in Education have significantly impacted include the Academic Bowl Club, MathCounts Club, Programming Club, Science Olympiad Club and Going Green Team Club.

Developing strong ties between students and stakeholders has given students opportunities to learn from adults both inside and outside the classroom. Students develop confidence as they partner with parent and business volunteers in non-academic settings.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

South Forsyth Middle School's (SFMS) highly qualified teachers facilitate student engagement in a rigorous curriculum based upon the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) for Math and Language Arts, and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for all other subjects. Students are placed in on-level, advanced/gifted or accelerated courses utilizing assessment data, academic performance and teacher recommendations.

The English Language Arts curriculum requires in-depth reading, enabling students to produce written responses by citing evidence to establish an argument or opinion. Students undertake projects, utilizing several types of texts of differing levels of complexity, which are used as the foundation for writing assignments. The focus on reading and writing extends beyond the language arts classroom across all disciplines.

Sixth grade math students develop an understanding of statistical thinking through whole number calculation, ratio and rate, division of fractions, rational and negative numbers, and using written expression to interpret equations. In seventh grade, students make inferences about populations, develop an understanding of proportional relationships, work expressions and linear equations, and use drawings and constructions to solve equations using area, surface and volume. In eighth grade, students model associations in bivariate data and solve linear equations. They describe quantitative relationships using functions and use distance, angle, similarity and congruence to analyze two- and three-dimensional space and figures by applying the Pythagorean Theorem. In addition to the eighth grade math curriculum, a high-school credit Accelerated Coordinate Algebra and Analytical Geometry course is offered.

Students focus on Earth Science in the sixth grade as they engage in the study of rocks, fossils, soil and erosion, weather, climate, the Earth's layers and the Solar System. The seventh grade life science curriculum includes the study of organisms, major systems, kingdoms, chromosomes and reproduction. Eighth graders take a high-school credit Physical Science course that includes energy, gravity, atoms, molecules, physical and chemical properties, electric and magnetic forces, light, velocity and acceleration.

Students in each grade learn the essential elements of social studies including geography, government, civics, economics and history. Sixth graders specifically study Latin America, Canada, Europe and Australia. The seventh grade curriculum includes Africa, the Middle East and Asia. In eighth grade, students focus on Georgia studies including the American Revolution, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Civil War and post-World War II developments.

Career pathways and connection classes are provided for students at all grade levels. Courses include: Art, Band, Business and Computer Science, Chorus, Dramatic Arts, Engineering and Technology, Music, Technological Systems and Yearbook. High-school credit is offered for eighth grade, yearlong classes in Band, Theatre and Chorus. A leadership class is also offered and focuses on confidence, courage, curiosity, compassion, character and community. Students are also selected to serve as typical peers for students in the self-contained, special needs classes.

A fifth academic period includes study skills classes for sixth and seventh grade students and foreign language for eighth grade students. The study skills class utilizes the Kansas University Strategic Instruction Model® (SIMS) learning strategies to ensure academic success throughout middle school and beyond. Eighth grade students are enrolled in beginning Spanish or a Spanish class for high school credit. Literacy classes provide targeted interventions and progress monitoring for students who require extra support in reading. Students who need extra support in mathematics are enrolled in an intensive math class providing a smaller-size class setting with targeted interventions and progress monitoring.

The curriculum is rigorous due to a culture of high expectations for both teachers and students in which failure is not an option. Teachers are expected to collaboratively design a variety of performance-based

learning opportunities that meet and exceed the CCGPS and GPS at each level. Students are expected to be academically responsible and engaged in coursework. Most importantly, our teachers and students are expected to work together until mastery is achieved.

2. Reading/English:

The English Language Arts curriculum is based on the CCGPS. The on-level, inclusion and advanced/gifted level courses provide a variety of opportunities for students to engage in performance-based learning. Students are placed in classes based on assessment data, academic performance and teacher recommendations. Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are served in co-taught classes with a highly qualified special education instructor planning and facilitating student engagement along with the general education classroom teacher.

At SFMS, an emphasis is placed on reading and writing across academic disciplines, and dedicated time is allocated specifically for this purpose in the school schedule twice weekly. In each academic area, students are expected to convey and support their ideas through performance-based tasks. Furthermore, in language arts courses, there is a focus on reading for literature, reading for information, writing, speaking, listening and language.

Language arts teachers engage students with a variety of reading material, including fiction and fact-based materials, and employ numerous strategies. Each of these texts is aligned to the complexity level of the grade to which they are assigned. Students in each grade use these texts to cite references and craft products, such as writing and presentations, as part of performance-based assignments. Student use of technology and proper use of language and grammar are seamlessly integrated into these performance tasks.

Students with reading deficits are identified through universal screening using district-level interim assessments and state testing results. Students are placed in a reading literacy class when appropriate. Reading intervention strategies include: Read Naturally, Six-Minute Solution, SRA Reading and Moby Max. All students are monitored through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and progress monitoring is maintained utilizing aimsweb®.

Students who read above grade level are identified through state testing based on their Lexile levels. Identified students are placed in advanced or gifted courses as appropriate.

The English Language Arts curriculum is further bolstered by opportunities outside the regular classroom. Students utilize their strong academic foundations to compete in the school spelling bee, oratorical contest and various writing contests. Additionally, SFMS encourages reading and literacy by hosting book fairs and planning curriculum-centered field trips.

3. Mathematics:

The Mathematics classes at South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) follow the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) for Math. Student needs are met through on-level, advanced/gifted, accelerated and intensive classes that provide rigorous instruction based on the abilities of the students. Placement in these classes is determined by assessment data, academic performance and teacher recommendations. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves by participating in high level math classes. All students, regardless of level, are exposed to performance tasks that promote critical thinking and application of math skills.

Math teachers at SFMS collaborate on a daily basis. Teachers collaborate on a grade-level basis, and also meet twice-yearly for vertical-team planning, with substitute teacher coverage provided to enable these meetings. Throughout these meetings, teachers collaborate to determine strategies supporting the instruction of algebra and proportional reasoning skills, concepts found to be the most difficult for students to master.

Although students participate in rote-skill acquisition, performance-based tasks play a heavy role in assessing students' understanding of concepts. These performance-based tasks require students to apply what they know rather than simply repeat memorized steps. Performance-based tasks require students to think beyond a multiple choice answer. Instead, students must justify their work and prove that their answers are reasonable. Prior to performance-based tasks or assessments, students participate in exploratory learning using manipulatives. This discovery approach enables students to visualize the math to enhance development of conceptual learning. During this time, teachers facilitate discovery and discussion of math concepts. Students also have the opportunity to practice skills through repetition, after concepts are learned. SFMS teachers use resources such as OnCore Mathematics, as well as many other web resources when designing lessons. Students identified as having weak math skills are further monitored using aimsweb.

Student feedback plays a very important role in helping students master concepts. Students are assessed formally and informally with quick in-class assessments, weekly quizzes and unit tests. Technology is frequently used as a way to provide instant feedback to students so that they may self-assess their progress. The intensive math classes are designed to provide a lower student-teacher ratio so students have a greater opportunity to receive individual help. The highest level math class – accelerated – pushes students to work at a grade-level higher than their peers and challenges students to dive even deeper into the core concepts taught in the on-level, advanced or gifted classes.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

About five years ago, a fifth academic class was added to the sixth grade curriculum. The course was designed to strengthen students' ability to be more active learners by teaching them research-based learning strategies.

Students who do not know or use appropriate learning strategies are often reluctant learners and ultimately fail in school. Learning strategy instruction helps students become more engaged by teaching them how to learn and to use this knowledge to systematically approach complex tasks and to be successful in school and throughout their lives.

The curriculum chosen for this course was the Kansas University Strategic Instruction Model® (SIMS). SIM is a comprehensive and research-validated approach to adolescent literacy that addresses reading, writing, studying and remembering, improving assignment and test performance, cooperative thinking and motivation.

The sixth grade course offers two reading strategies: inferencing and paraphrasing. The LINCS strategy is taught to aid in studying and remembering key terms. To improve test performance, a test-taking strategy is also included in the course. In 2011, after seeing improvements in sixth grade students' approach to learning, the decision to offer additional SIM strategy instruction to seventh grade students was made.

The seventh grade curriculum includes fundamentals in writing and proficiency in writing. The strategy of paired associates is introduced to aid studying and remembering. Listening and note-taking strategies are used to increase memory and improve study practices. A cooperative thinking strategy, Talking Together, is also included in the seventh grade curriculum.

Teachers instructing these courses are required to be trained by a certified SIM instructor. The school is fortunate to have a certified instructor on staff to provide training and serve as a course instructor for these classes. To support the goal of successful student implementation, other academic teachers have been trained in the various strategies so they can reinforce use of the strategies by students throughout all classes.

5. Instructional Methods:

The teachers at South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) design differentiated lessons based on the needs of each student, regardless of their class level. Before the beginning of a unit, students are assessed using a pre-test to determine any prior knowledge of the upcoming content. These pre-tests allow teachers to create

lessons that build on what students already know, rather than subject the students to repeating skills. This also enables teachers to address any misconceptions of previously learned material before new concepts are taught.

Students in all classes experience high quality lessons that challenge each student at an appropriate level. Students in the intensive or on-level classes may be given more guidance on steps and processes, while students in advanced and gifted classes are given fewer guidelines or prompts. All students are offered opportunities to enrich their learning. Learning Support Time is offered during school hours twice a week for students to get extra help from their teachers. This time gives students the opportunity to get personal support without having to come in early or stay after school. Students who are not actively engaged with a teacher during this time work on novel studies or complete writing activities.

Collaboration between content-area teachers and special education teachers creates a strong co-teaching partnership. Both teachers work together for the benefit of all students in the classroom. Instruction is taught in whole group, small group and individual settings based on the needs of the students. Special education teachers also teach additional support classes for students needing extra time to grasp content they are learning in core classes. To encourage proper learning and study habits, all sixth and seventh graders take part in a study skills class based on the University of Kansas Strategic Instruction Model® (SIM). These strategies are also reinforced in the core classes.

SFMS fully embraces the use of technology in the classroom. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, laptop and desktop computers, and scanners. Student response devices are used for immediate feedback. The school also offers wireless network to encourage students to Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) and the media center offers tablet devices for check-out. Teachers at SFMS engage students through the use of interactive lessons and websites. With the use of these technologies, students apply core skills on a 21st century level.

6. Professional Development:

Professional learning at South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) is strategically developed to provide differentiated support for individual teacher experiences and needs. Over the past five years, teachers have engaged in professional learning to enhance grading practices, improve student writing throughout the curriculum, and employ data teams to improve instruction. Based on self-assessment, teachers have the opportunity to grow professionally by learning how to appropriately use formative assessments, give constructive feedback, and differentiate learning based on student learning styles, interest and level of knowledge.

Five years ago, SFMS examined the grading practices of teachers and designed professional learning to ensure that standards-based grading was employed, accurately reflecting what students learned. Based on input from year-long instruction on grading practices, the leadership team developed standards-based grading policies and procedures. Additionally, with the support of county administration, a Work Habits rubric was added to the semester report cards. The Work Habits rubric provided a place for teachers to report students' strengths and weaknesses in the areas of responsibility, participation, assignment completion and interpersonal skills.

In 2010, the focus of professional learning was on improving student writing across all content areas. Feedback on student work was emphasized, and technology was utilized to support this effort. Criterion®, a web-based instructional writing tool, was used to help students plan, write and revise their essays, guided by instant diagnostic feedback.

The following year, teachers were allowed to focus on their individual areas of growth. Topics of focus included providing student feedback, creation of common assessments and instructional differentiation. Teachers completed a self-assessment and chose an area of needed development, allowing them to receive year-long professional learning focused on their identified needs.

During the last two years, professional learning has centered on the creation of data teams and the use of assessment data to drive classroom instruction. Data usage and analysis has accelerated the use of pre- and post-unit testing as well as common summative assessments in all content areas. Additionally, teachers continue to receive ongoing professional learning to utilize a web-based platform which allows teachers to assess student performance and provide individual lessons based on student needs.

7. School Leadership

Leadership at South Forsyth Middle School (SFMS) is focused on meeting the needs of all students, ensuring that each has the ability to be successful academically, emotionally and socially.

The administrative team is comprised of a principal and two assistant principals. The principal is the lead instructor in the building and is focused on academic instruction and student progress. Strategic direction is set by the principal and she is responsible for creating a supportive culture that engages all students.

The principal is the primary contact for groups who support students and teachers. She constantly collaborates with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Local School Council (LSC) as well as leading the school Leadership Team. Funding events and programs, along with establishing and maintaining strong relationships with business and community partners are key areas of her responsibilities. SFMS has two assistant principals who are responsible for day to day support of students, teachers and staff, as well as supporting the principal in strategic planning. Instructional leadership is their primary role, working with teachers daily to ensure that instruction is well designed and implemented. Areas of focus include working to provide support for struggling students and to provide opportunities for high achieving students. Both assistant principals lead the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and support individual student support through Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). Daily collaboration with teachers ensures that all students are supported based on their needs. The assistant principals are also primary contacts for parent questions, concerns and feedback.

The Leadership Team is a group of teachers who work to support school initiatives and to support the faculty throughout the year. Representing a variety of content areas, the Leadership Team has led the school's efforts to implement the data team process that drives instructional decisions. The Leadership Team is a valuable voice for the faculty, and provides input and feedback to school administrators on academic and faculty-related matters. The inclusion of the Leadership Team in key decisions fosters a culture of involvement and sets the foundation for a true professional learning community.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Test

All Students Tested/Grade: 6

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Georgia Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	99	97	95	97	97
% Exceeds	64	59	47	61	60
Number of students tested	341	318	275	295	340
Percent of total students tested	99	100	99	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	2	0	3	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	0	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	95	93	82	88
% Exceeds	59	58	29	35	33
Number of students tested	22	19	14	17	24
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	91	83	65	85	80
% Exceeds	30	34	20	30	16
Number of students tested	33	29	20	20	25
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	87	90	93	93	100
% Exceeds	20	40	33	57	45
Number of students tested	15	20	15	14	11
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	97
% Exceeds	82	86	79	63	73
Number of students tested	38	51	29	35	33

7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	99	97	94	97	97
% Exceeds	64	55	44	62	61
Number of students tested	266	238	215	233	277
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests

All Students Tested/Grade: 7

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Georgia Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	99	100	99	97	98
% Exceeds	80	82	76	67	63
Number of students tested	317	276	294	255	322
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	2	2	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	1	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	92	100
% Exceeds	75	69	56	46	41
Number of students tested	12	13	16	13	17
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	96	100	89	70	87
% Exceeds	39	61	37	15	30
Number of students tested	23	18	19	20	23
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	
% Exceeds	59	67	86	47	
Number of students tested	17	15	14	15	6
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	100
% Exceeds	98	100	78	80	76
Number of students tested	53	33	36	15	29
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					

% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	99	100	99	97	98
% Exceeds	78	80	74	67	62
Number of students tested	241	214	231	207	276
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests

All Students Tested/Grade: 8

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Georgia Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	96	95	96	96
% Exceeds	67	52	61	50	70
Number of students tested	280	294	262	289	300
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	100	99
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	3	1	1	0	2
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	0	0	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	94	100	100	89	86
% Exceeds	50	39	42	28	43
Number of students tested	16	18	12	18	21
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	89	71	79	76
% Exceeds	33	22	14	7	20
Number of students tested	21	18	21	14	25
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	88	90
% Exceeds	56	67	60	50	20
Number of students tested	16	12	15	16	10
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	95	100	100	97
% Exceeds	97	62	74	58	90
Number of students tested	29	37	19	19	29
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					

% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	99	97	95	96	96
% Exceeds	63	51	61	50	71
Number of students tested	222	232	208	244	248
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests

All Students Tested/Grade: 6

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Georgia Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	99
% Exceeds	84	79	71	76	71
Number of students tested	343	321	276	295	337
Percent of total students tested	99	100	99	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	2	0	3	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	0	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	96
% Exceeds	59	74	36	40	33
Number of students tested	22	20	14	15	24
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	92
% Exceeds	37	39	29	45	24
Number of students tested	35	31	21	20	25
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	100
% Exceeds	67	70	53	79	64
Number of students tested	15	20	15	14	11
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	100
% Exceeds	84	84	86	66	76
Number of students tested	38	51	29	35	29
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					

% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	99
% Exceeds	84	78	69	78	71
Number of students tested	268	241	216	233	276
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests

All Students Tested/Grade: 7

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Georgia Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	99	99	98
% Exceeds	72	62	58	56	38
Number of students tested	321	278	298	255	322
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	2	2	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	1	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	88
% Exceeds	54	69	31	31	24
Number of students tested	13	13	16	13	17
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	87	95	83
% Exceeds	22	35	22	10	9
Number of students tested	27	20	23	20	23
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	
% Exceeds	59	53	50	67	
Number of students tested	17	15	14	15	6
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	97	100	97
% Exceeds	89	70	39	53	34
Number of students tested	53	33	36	15	29
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					

% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	98
% Exceeds	70	61	62	56	39
Number of students tested	244	216	234	207	276
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests

All Students Tested/Grade: 8

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Georgia Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	99
% Exceeds	77	73	71	62	57
Number of students tested	283	299	241	289	299
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	100	99
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	2	1	1	0	2
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	1	1	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	100
% Exceeds	66	33	42	39	29
Number of students tested	15	18	12	18	21
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	92
% Exceeds	39	27	27	36	20
Number of students tested	23	22	22	14	25
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	100
% Exceeds	75	75	53	63	20
Number of students tested	16	12	15	16	10
5. African- American Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	96
% Exceeds	86	62	53	68	50
Number of students tested	29	37	19	19	28
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					

% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds	100	100	100	100	99
% Exceeds	76	76	70	64	61
Number of students tested	225	236	209	244	248
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Meets plus % Exceeds					
% Exceeds					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: